MICK

THE DISOBEDIENT PUPPY

A LADYBIRD BOOK

PUPPIES are usually very disobedient and mischievous and Mick, a black poodle with bright eyes in its woolly face, is no exception to the rule.

Children will enjoy this fascinating story, full of exciting incidents from the first day Mick was presented to Peter on his birthday, right to the end when Mick warned Peter's father that the house was on fire.

A "LADYBIRD" BOOK

2/6
NET

MICK

THE DISOBEDIENT PUPPY

A Story by

NOEL BARR

Illustrations by

P. B. HICKLING

Publishers: Wills & Hepworth Ltd., Loughborough

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

©

MICK, THE DISOBEDIENT PUPPY

"What would you like most of all for your birthday, Peter," asked Mr. Brown, sitting down and picking up the newspaper.

"I'd like a dog of my very own, Daddy," Peter said at once, and he went over to sit on the arm of his father's chair.

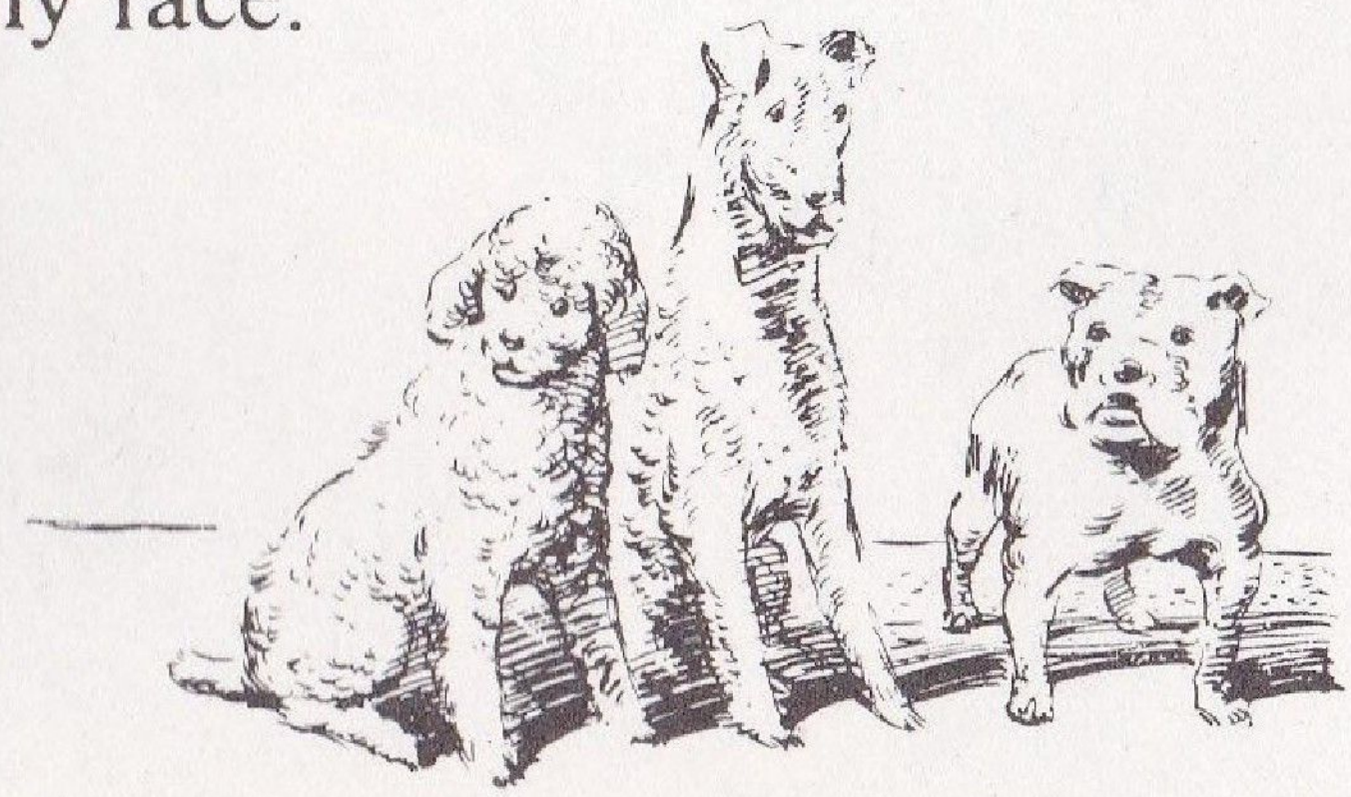
"A dog?" said Mr. Brown, turning to look at him. "I wonder what Mummy thinks of that!"

Mrs. Brown looked up from her darning. "I think it's rather a good idea," she said. "It would be nice for Peter to have a pet, and a dog would protect the house as well."

"All right," said Peter's father, unfolding the newspaper. "You shall have a dog of your own on your birthday. Let me see, you are going to be eight, aren't you? How you're growing up!"

"Hooray!" shouted Peter, "Oh! hooray!" and he jumped on to the sofa and turned head over heels.

Peter's birthday was on a Saturday, so he and his father and mother were all able to go and choose a dog. They saw all kinds, large and small. Mr. Brown liked a bull-dog, but quite agreed with his wife that it wasn't what they wanted. Mrs. Brown thought an Irish terrier would be nice, but Peter ran up to them with a little black bundle in his arms and said excitedly: "May I have this one, Daddy? I like him better than any," and he showed them a poodle puppy, with bright eyes shining in its black woolly face.



Peter's father and mother thought the poodle was just right, and very soon he was Peter's own. They took him home in the bus, and he sat on Peter's knee and licked his face over and over again. When they reached home Mrs. Brown found a large basket and a rug for the puppy; and Peter begged hard to have him sleep in his room, and was delighted when his mother said he might.

"What are we going to call him?" asked Mr. Brown.

"I think Rags would do," said Mrs. Brown.

"Oh but Mummy, he's not raggy, only woolly," said Peter, stroking the puppy's soft coat.

"How d'you like Blackie?" asked Mr. Brown.

"The cat next door is called Blackie," Peter said. "I'd like him to be called Mick."

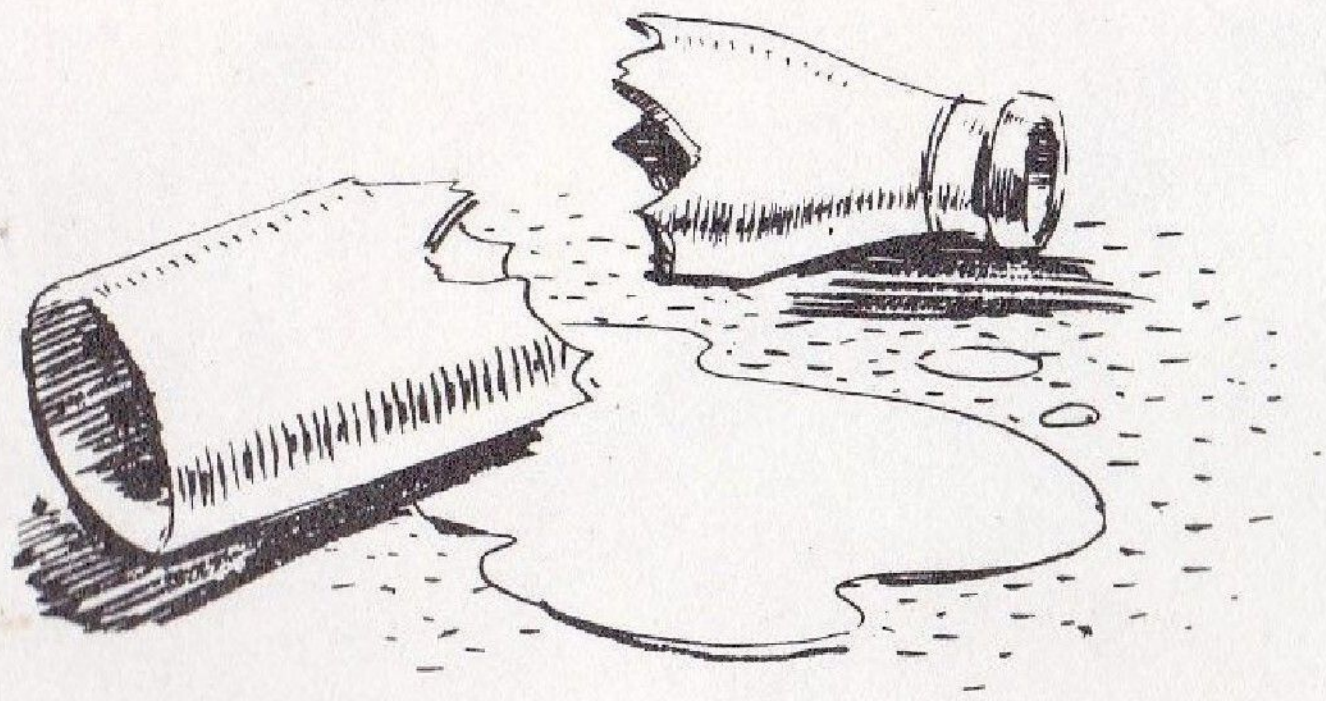
"Yes," said his mother, "we'll call him Mick. It's a nice name."

Mick lay in his basket in Peter's room, thinking how lucky he was, and very soon he went to sleep.

Later on he woke up and felt a little lonely, so he jumped on to the end of Peter's bed. Peter was asleep, so Mick snuggled down close to his feet and was very happy. The eiderdown was soft and silky and he liked the feel of it. He liked it so much he began to lick it, and then he began to bite it, and by the time he fell asleep there was a large hole in it. Peter's mother was very sad when she saw it in the morning, and she showed it to Mick and spanked him, then she put him in his basket to teach him that it was there that he was to sleep.

Mick came down to breakfast with Peter, and was told to sit on the rug by the fire, but he dashed out of the back door to bark at the milkman who was just opening the garden gate. The milkman laughed so much at the sight of him that he tripped over the step and broke a bottle of milk, and the milk ran in all directions. Then Mick ran after a cat in the garden, and took no notice at all when Peter and Mr. Brown called him. He darted here and there and by the time he was caught a great many of the tulips had their heads snapped off.

He was spanked again.



"Oh dear," sighed Mrs. Brown, "a hole in the eiderdown, spilt milk and broken tulips. Oh dear, I hope he will soon learn to do as he is told!"

"I hope so, too," agreed Mr. Brown. "My poor tulips!"

But Mick did not learn to obey. He did just as he liked and went on doing it until he wanted to stop, whatever people said to him.

"We shall have to spank him until he learns," said Peter's father.

"Not very hard, Daddy," said Peter, hugging Mick.

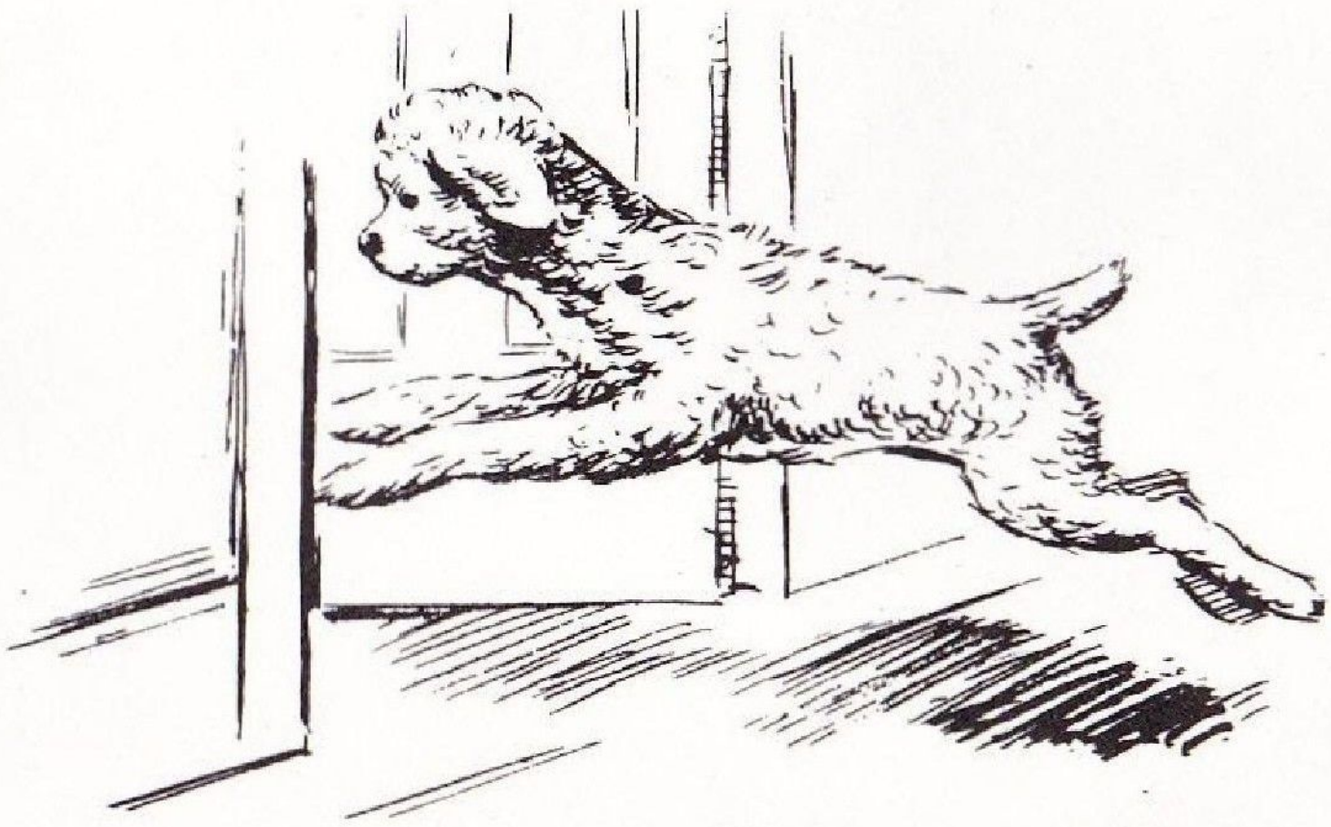
"Not very hard," said Mr. Brown. "Just hard enough to make him remember."

On the following day Mick went with Peter for a country walk. They saw a farm dog bringing in some brown cows to be milked. Mick thought he could be just as clever with the sheep in the field on the other side of the road. He squeezed under the gate and ran here, there and everywhere. He barked, he growled and he yelped until the poor sheep were so frightened that they didn't know what to do. Very soon some were in the ditch, others had pushed through the hedge and were on the road, and the rest were still scampering round the field.

Peter called and called as loudly as he could, but Mick took no notice of him. A very angry farmer came hurrying from the farmyard, and at last he and Peter managed to catch the puppy. This time he was spanked by the farmer, and rather hard too, and then Peter took him home in disgrace.

Mick had made himself so dirty when he chased the sheep in and out of the ditches that Mrs. Brown said he must have a bath. She got ready a wooden tub partly filled with warm soapy water. When Mick was lifted into it he struggled because it felt so strange to be wet all over, then he rather liked it, but when a little soap got in his eye he decided it was a very silly game, jumped out of the tub and ran out of the kitchen.

"Come here, Mick ! Come here !" called Mrs. Brown as she and Peter hurried after him. Mick, of course, pretended not to hear and vanished into the sitting room.



"Oh, my new cushions," cried Mrs. Brown, "he'll jump on them!" And she was just in time to see the puppy shake himself hard and then jump on to one of the new cushions on the arm chair.

"Oh, why can't you do as you're told," said Mrs. Brown as she lifted him off, "you are the most disobedient dog I've ever known. Bring him back, Peter, we must get the soap off him, and then I must see what I can do to my poor cushion."

So Mick was taken back to the kitchen and held firmly by Peter while he was rinsed, and then he was rubbed in a towel until he was dry.

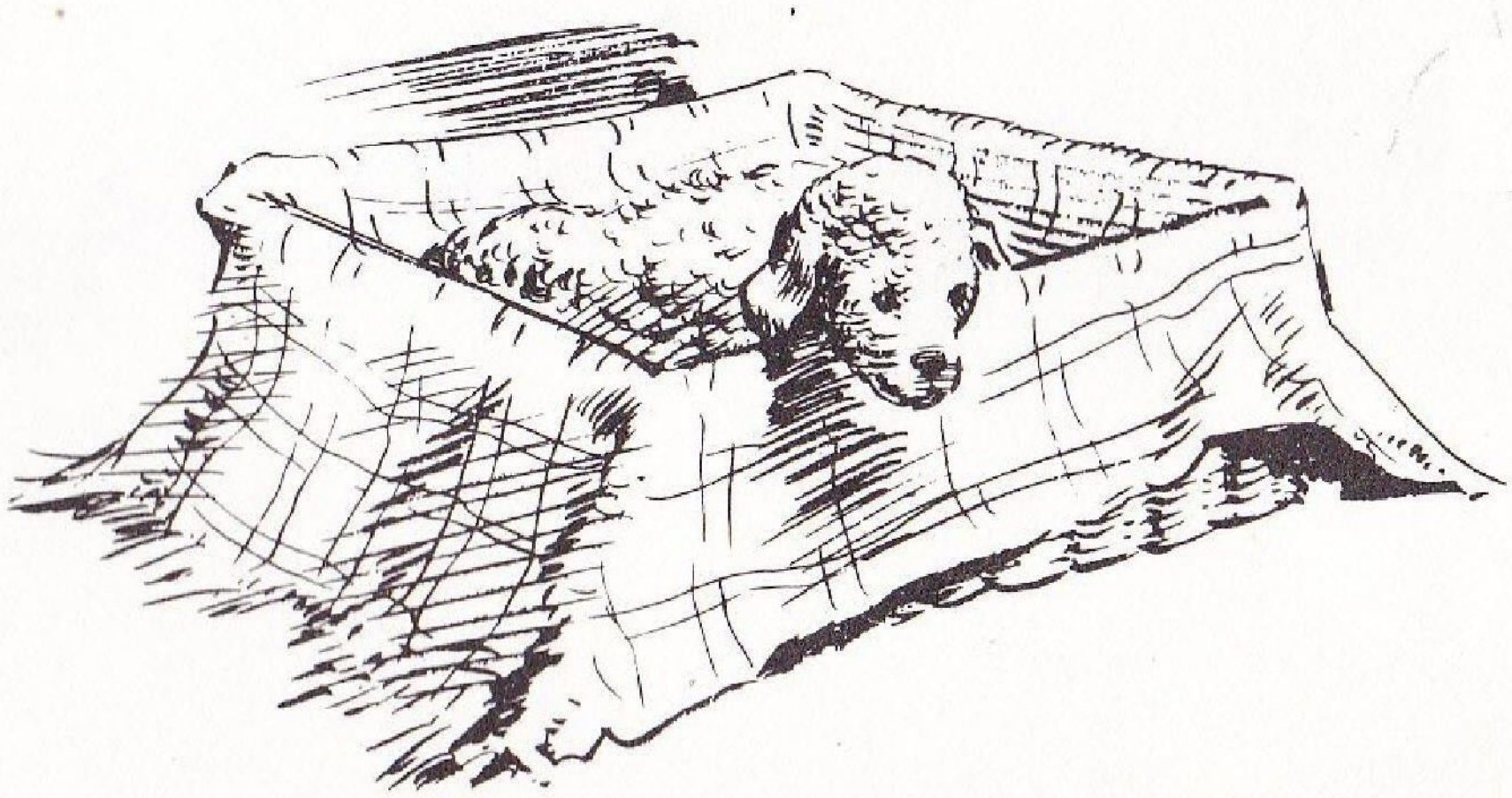
"It really is very difficult," Peter's mother said to his father that evening, "I seem to be busy all day you are out and Peter is at school. We have no time to train Mick as he ought to be trained. Oh, look where he is now!" All three of them hurried to the window, and through it they saw Mick close to the bee-hives. He was trying to look into one of the tiny front doors.

"Mick! Come here!" shouted Mr. Brown, throwing up the window. "Come here, you silly fellow, you'll be stung! I've done my best to teach him to keep away, I must go and get him!"

But before Mr. Brown could jump out of the window there was a howl of pain from Mick, and he ran whimpering towards the house.

"Oh poor Mick," cried Peter, following his father out of the window, "poor Mick, he's been stung on the nose!" And so he had, and Peter's mother put something that was good for stings on it; but it was a very swollen little nose that she put it on.

Mick was very sorry for himself and went to curl up in his basket, but his nose did not hurt him for very long and soon he was happy and lively again.



Of course, they all loved Mick, they couldn't help it, but it was annoying that he was so disobedient. He wasn't a very good house dog either, for he welcomed everyone but the postman and the milkman, and he barked very loudly at them.

One day an old lady came to tea. Mrs. Brown knew she didn't care very much for dogs, so she put Mick in the kitchen and told him to stay there.

"Now stay where you are," she said again as she opened the door to go out, but before she knew what had happened Mick was up and out before her in a flash. He dashed into the sitting room, saw the visitor, rushed to greet her and upset her cup of tea all over her dress.

There's only one thing to be done," Mr. Brown said when they were alone again. "We must send him back to where he came from so that he can be properly trained and taught to be obedient. All this spanking is teaching him nothing. Besides, I don't like spanking him."

"Oh Daddy, would he have to be away for long?" asked Peter, lifting Mick on to his knee.

"I should say for about a month," answered his father. "Sorry Peter, but he really will have to go."

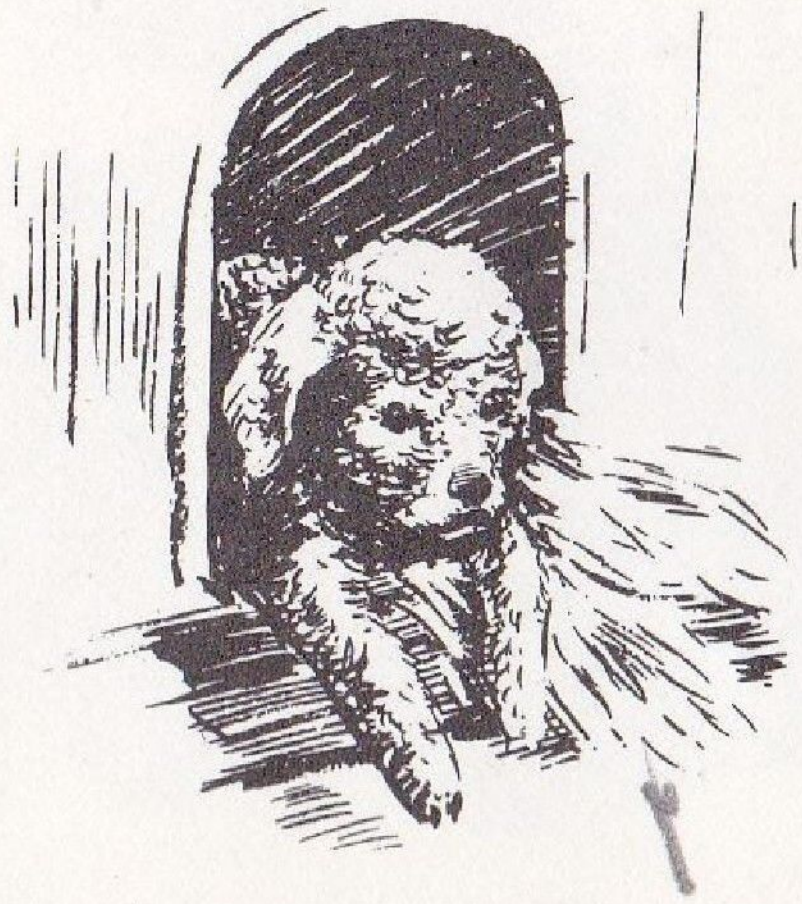
So Mick was taken back. He hated going, and he and Peter had a sad goodbye. Peter told him to hurry up and learn to be good, and Mick licked Peter's hands, trying to tell him he would.

He was put in one of a row of kennels, each one with a run of its own. He talked to the dogs on either side of him. They told him that the men who taught them were kind but that all the dogs had to work very hard.

"Do they spank?" asked Mick.

"Yes," he was told, "they spank if we don't do as we are told."

Mick felt very lonely. He went to sleep on the floor of his kennel wishing that he could wake up and find himself in his basket.



Next morning his lessons began. He didn't like them very much. He was made to run and stop at a signal, to come quickly when he was called, and to lie down when he was told. He was tired when it was all over, and ready for the dinner he was given. Then he lay on his straw and thought about Peter. He DID want Peter. How he longed to be home again.

This went on for about a week, and Mick found he was almost enjoying his lessons. He decided that it was nice to be patted and not spanked when he did as he was told, and somehow it made him feel nicer inside. But always he wanted Peter and his home.

At last Mick could bear it no longer, so he ran away. When he was called he took no notice at all, but ran and ran through three fields and into a lane as fast as he could.

"I know this isn't doing as I'M told," he panted as he ran, "but it is the last time I shall disobey. I MUST get home to Peter."

He stood still in the lane and looked round carefully, thought for a little while, and then set off to find his way home. He had one or two adventures. First of all some children tried their best to catch him because he was a "lovely doggie," and then he was very nearly run down by a boy on a bicycle, but the boy managed very cleverly and neither he nor Mick was hurt.

At last, late in the evening when it was quite dark, he found the road in which he lived and raced down it as quickly as he could. Suddenly he stopped. "Suppose they are angry with me for running away," he thought, "and send me straight back; I'd better get in without being seen, and then if I can find Peter perhaps I shall be safe."

Mick waited by the back door and managed to slip into the house while Mrs. Brown was putting the milk bottles outside. She didn't see him because his black coat did not show in the dark. He ran into the sitting room and scuttled under one of the big arm chairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown began to lock the doors and close the windows, so Mick knew that they were getting ready to go to bed. Peter must have been asleep for a long time now, and his bedroom door would be closed, it was no use to think of seeing him until the morning. Mick heard feet going upstairs, and then he heard a door close. He slipped out and lay on the rug in front of the dying fire.

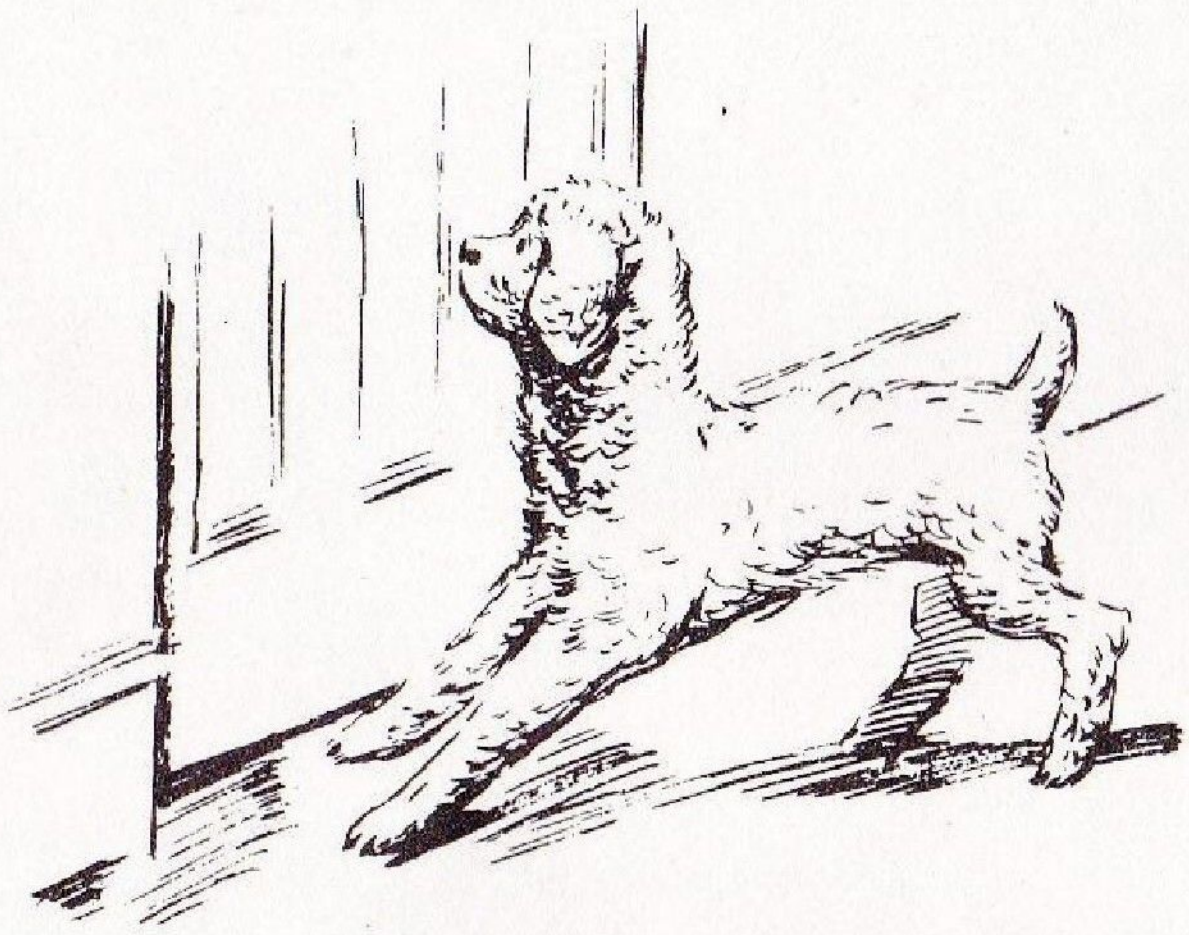
"How lovely it is to be home again," he sighed. "I do hope they will let me stay. If only I could go up and see Peter." He stretched himself out at full length and closed his eyes.

"How LOVELY it is to be home again." he thought, and then he went to sleep.

Suddenly Mick woke up. He lifted his head and his nose went "Sniff sniff!" There was a queer smell, a very queer smell, and he didn't like it. He jumped up and ran into the kitchen. On the rug was a red cinder with smoke rising from it, and the smell was a smell of burning.

"Oh goodness," thought Mick, "oh goodness! What do I do now? I know!" and away he rushed up the stairs to the door of Mr. and Mrs. Brown's bedroom.

"Scratch scratch!" he went on the door, and "Wuff wuff!" he barked as loudly as he could. "Scratch! Wuff, wuff wuff!"



In a moment the door opened and out came Mr. Brown in his dressing gown, and just behind him was Mrs. Brown in her dressing gown, and almost at the same moment Peter rushed out of his bedroom in his pyjamas.

" Mick ! " they all cried—" Mick, how did you get "— and then Mr. Brown smelt the burning smell and was off downstairs three steps at a time. Mrs. Brown hurried after him, and Peter only waited to pick up Mick before he was off too.

They found the kitchen rug on fire, but Mr. Brown soon put out the blaze with a bucket of water; and then the water had to be mopped up, so that it was not until all that had been done that they could even begin to think why Mick was there, and what a very good thing it was that he WAS there.

"He must have run away," Peter said. "Oh, but isn't it lovely to have him back," and he hugged Mick hard, while Mick himself licked Peter's face all over, and wagged his funny tail at a great rate.

"Yes, it is," said his father, tickling Mick under his chin, "but I'm afraid after only a week he will have learnt very little."

"But what a good thing it is that he was here," said Mrs. Brown, and she picked up Mick and carried him up to Peter's bedroom. Then she made some tea and brought up milk and biscuits for Peter and Mick, and they all had a midnight feast. After that a very happy puppy jumped into his basket, and a very happy boy curled up in bed. But when Peter was asleep Mick jumped on to the end of the bed, so that he could be near the little lump that was Peter's feet.

"HOW LOVELY IT IS TO BE HOME AGAIN," he thought, and this time he didn't bite the eiderdown, but slept until morning. When Peter woke they had a lovely game together. Over the bed and under the bed and on to the chairs, then Mick ran off with one of Peter's shoes and Peter threw the other one at him, and then they went down to breakfast.

When Peter had finished his porridge he said that he thought Mick must be a very good house dog indeed because he had really and truly saved the house from being burnt down.

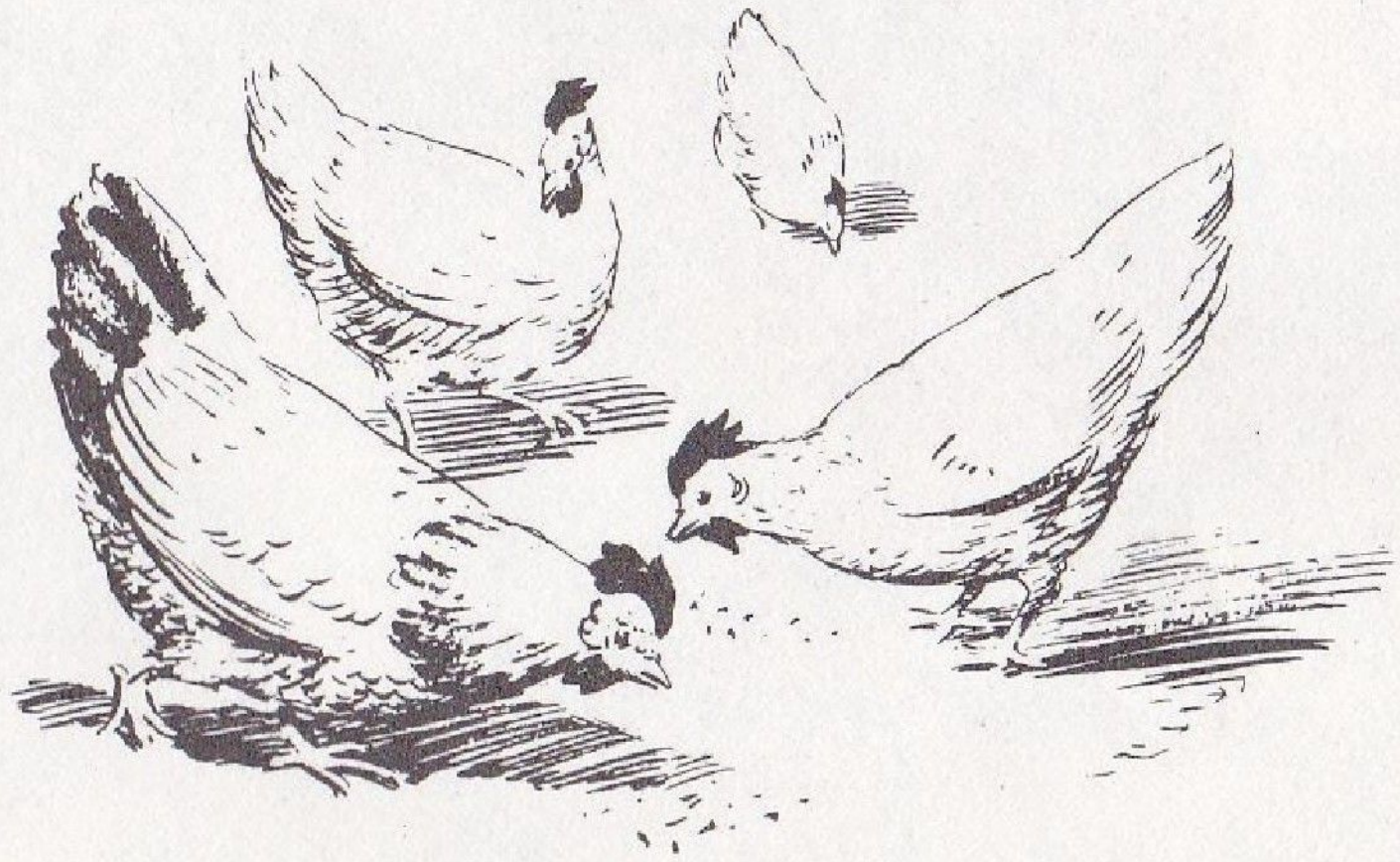
"Yes," said Mrs. Brown, "he is just perfect, and we won't part with him again," and she gave Mick a toast crust.

"He did us a very good turn last night," said Mr. Brown, "and if only he would obey I should say he was perfect too."

Just at that moment Mick sprang through the window, rushed through the hedge at the end of the garden and began to chase some hens in the field beyond.

"Come here, Mick ! Come here ! You'll kill those hens !" shouted Mr. Brown. "Come here at once !"

To his amazement Mick turned round and came scampering back through the hedge and up to the window. Here he stopped and looked up as if he were saying, "Yes, d'you want me ?"

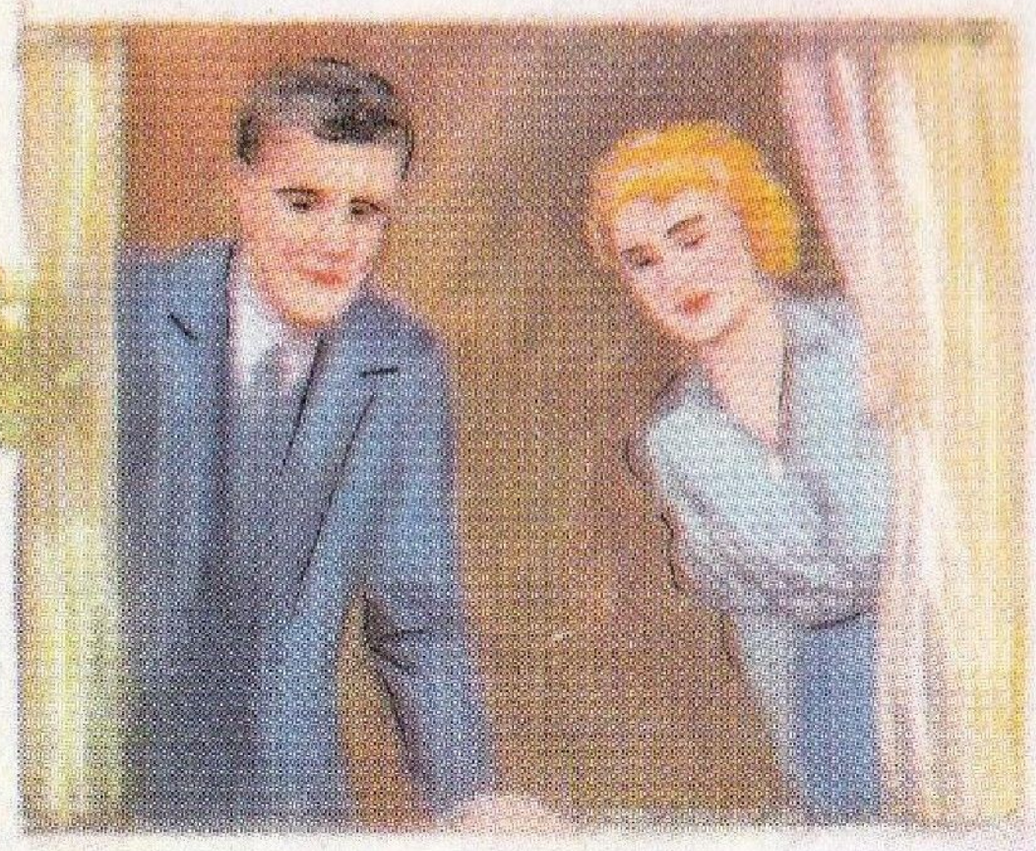


Mr. and Mrs. Brown looked at one another, and Peter danced round them shouting, "He's learnt to be good, he's learnt to be good!" and then he climbed out of the window to Mick.

"It seems he has," said Mr. Brown. "So that makes him absolutely perfect, doesn't it?"

"I should think it does," answered Mrs. Brown. "How glad I am that we didn't have an Irish terrier or a bulldog. Mick is the dog for us!"

Peter and Mick said nothing. They were far too busy rolling about on the grass in a fine game of rough and tumble.



LIST OF TITLES IN SERIES 497:

The Inquisitive Harvest Mouse

Tiptoes, the Mischievous Kitten

The Wise Robin

The Discontented Pony

The Conceited Lamb

Beaky, the Greedy Duck

Ned, the Lonely Donkey

Mick, the Disobedient Puppy

Cocky, the Lazy Rooster

The Sleepy Water Vole